

City of Flagstaff New Zoning Code Focus Group Structure, Organization and Expectations



March 30, 2009

FOCUS GROUPS FOR THE ZONING CODE REWRITE:

Introduction

Unlike the process established for the update to the Regional Plan that relies on a City/County appointed Citizen Advisory Group, the approach taken for the creation of a new zoning code for the City of Flagstaff is more “grass roots” in nature. It will rely instead on the establishment of citizen volunteer Focus Groups to provide a venue for public engagement in the process, as well as through existing established City Boards, Commissions and Committees. In addition, various open houses, public presentations, “listening sessions” and eventually public hearings will provide numerous means for citizens to be heard and offer their opinions on the new zoning code.

This document provides an overview of how the Focus Groups will be established, their purpose, and how Focus Group meetings will be posted, administered and managed.

Focus Groups

At this stage a total of 12 Focus Groups are proposed as a way of involving the general public and citizen experts in the Zoning Code Rewrite. Focus Groups will be formed for specific areas of interest such as housing, resource preservation, lighting issues, etc. for which there is not already an official City Commission, Committee or Board. A detailed list of Focus Groups with the names of a staff member(s) providing technical assistance to that Focus Group is provided below;

FOCUS GROUP NAME:	STAFF SPECIALISTS:
Design guidelines	Karl Eberhard
Housing	Erika Mazza
Building and Fire Code	Edwin Larsen/Paul Stein
Fire – Wildland/tree issues	Mark Shiery
Neighborhood Planning	Kim Sharp
Downtown	Kim Sharp/Becky Daggett
Economic Development/Business/ Real Estate	Becky Daggett
Landscaping	Elaine Averitt/Ellen Ryan/Roger E. Eastman
Resource Preservation – Trees/slopes floodplains/	Vince Knaggs/Mark Sawyers
Outdoor Lighting	Roger E. Eastman
Signage	Roger E. Eastman
Process and Procedures	Vince Knaggs/ Mark Sawyers

As needed once the rewrite of the zoning code is underway, additional Focus Groups may be formed to study and comment on other specific areas of interest.

Focus Group Formation

Members of the Focus Groups will not be appointed by the City Council. The Focus Groups will be formed from individuals who have expressed an interest in working with staff on this important project as a result of either one-on-one conversations with City staff or in response to an e-mail sent to over 500 citizens who have either indicating their desire to work with staff on this project or whose names were provided to staff by other Flagstaff residents.

It is intended that the membership of each Focus Group will be as diverse as possible and that each group include citizens with a range of related interests as well as City staff representing a diverse range of expertise.

City staff will not select the members of the Focus Groups. Based on a member's availability and level of interest in the topic of each Focus Group, a core group of maximum 12 Focus Group members will be established who commit to regular attendance at Focus Group meetings. All other citizens may attend a Focus Group meeting and will have an opportunity to express their opinions.

Members of the Focus Groups need not be City residents. However, the chairperson of the Focus Group must be a city resident or a property owner within the City if they live outside the City limits, and may not be serving on an existing City Board or Commission or the Regional Plan 2012 Citizen Advisory Committee. However, any citizen serving on the Regional Plan 2012 Citizen Advisory Committee or serving on an existing City board or Commission may be a member of a Focus Group and participate in Focus Group meetings.

Focus Group Purpose/Expectations

The Focus Groups described above will be formed to focus on a specific area of interest relative to the proposed new zoning code for the City of Flagstaff. The purpose of the Focus Groups is to provide direction, comment and ideas to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) – essentially City staff – and the consultant during the process of creating a new zoning code. Their primary role will therefore be to identify and frame the issues, and to rationalize why an amendment is needed. For example, a Focus Group will determine how well the existing LDC meets the needs of the community with regard to the topic of the Focus Group, and positive and negative outcomes will be identified. Based on this discussion, the Focus Group will then determine what the desired outcome for their topic of interest is, and this will be forwarded to staff and the planning consultants who will then produce a draft code that hopefully satisfies the desired outcome.

In summary then the Focus Groups will be outcome focused with a strong emphasis on general issues rather than getting into the details of technical code review.

Focus Group Meeting Frequency

Some Focus Groups may need to hold more meetings than others because of the complexity of the topic under review and discussion. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that on average, as the Focus Groups are intended to only look at the big issues and will not get into detailed code review, most groups should be able to complete their initial work in 4-6

meetings through the first few months of the project – late spring/early summer 2008. As code chapters or sections are drafted later this year and into next year, the Focus Groups will meet once again for a few meetings to ensure that the desired outcome has been achieved.

Focus Group Meetings

From a core group of no more than 12 citizens who agree to regular attendance at Focus Group meetings for as long as necessary and who constitute the core members of the Focus Group, a chairperson will be selected who will serve on a Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) – see below for further information on the CAG. As noted above, any citizen serving on the Regional Plan 2012 Citizen Advisory Committee or on a City Board or Commission may not be the chairperson of a Focus Group, but they may be a member of the Focus Group and participate in the meetings.

While it is ideal that core members of the Focus Group attend all meetings, this is not realistic as vacations, business and family commitments and other events may preclude this desire. Nonetheless, it is important that the core members of the Focus Group who commit to regular attendance do their best to attend as many meetings as possible. Other participants in the Focus Group are welcome to attend as many meetings as they are able to share their ideas and make their opinions known. Of course, comments may also be provided to all Focus Group members via and staff via e-mail, fax, or regular mail.

Focus Group meetings will be open to the public and anyone may attend. While not technically required by the Open Meeting Law, all Focus Group meetings will be posted in the City's official public noticing locations, on the City website, and elsewhere in the City so that the public can be informed of the meeting and has a chance to attend.

The chairperson of each Focus Group will run the meeting and ensure that each member has an opportunity to speak, meetings start and end on time, and that an appropriate level of civility and decorum is maintained throughout the meeting.

Focus Group meetings will be relatively informal and it is anticipated that no formal motions with seconds of motions will be necessary when the group makes decisions. Instead, a simple group consensus or majority of members who are in agreement on the issue at hand will be recorded as the Focus Group's final decisions. When agreement cannot be reached, the dissenting opinion will also be recorded in the action minutes for that meeting.

Action minutes will be maintained by a Focus Group member (or this can be a rotating position so that all members share this responsibility) so that all important decisions can be recorded. Minutes will be posted on the City's Zoning Update website and kept on file for public review.

Focus Group Meeting Locations and Times

At this time, details of Focus Group meeting locations and meeting times have yet to be finalized. Once a final diverse group of citizens has been assembled for each Focus Group, they will be contacted via e-mail and asked to provide the day of the week and time that is most convenient to them to meet. When a consensus on the best meeting time and day had been determined, staff will then attempt to find an appropriate meeting location.

All meetings will be held at either City hall, another City facility (such as one of the libraries, Thorpe Park Community Center, Aquaplex, etc.) or possibly NAU. As much as possible, those citizens expressing a desire for day care so that they can attend the meeting will be accommodated.

Meeting Announcements

City staff will ensure that an agenda for all Focus Group meetings will be posted in the City's official public noticing locations and on the City website. In addition, members of all Focus Groups and citizens who have asked to be placed on a mailing list will receive an agenda for all Focus Group meetings. This will ensure that as many people as possible are informed of the Focus Group meetings so that if they have the time and interest they may attend.

Citizen Advisory Group (CAG)

The Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) is made up of the elected chairpersons from each of the Focus Groups. CAG members must be either City residents or property owners within the City if they live outside the City limits. Members of the CAG will appoint their own chairperson.

The purpose of the CAG is as follows:

- Provide an additional opportunity for public engagement for the new City Zoning Code
- Provide a forum for coordination between the Focus Groups
- Participate in review of draft sections of the new zoning code
- Participate in the micro-scale documentation and the charrette for the areas of the City where a form-based code may be applied.

Meetings of the CAG will be open to the public. Meetings of the CAG will be subject to the Open Meeting Law, and thus their meetings will be posted in the City's official public noticing locations, on the City website, and elsewhere in the City so that the public can be informed of the meeting and has a chance to attend. Action minutes will also be maintained so that all important decisions can be recorded. Minutes will be posted on the City website and kept on file for public review. The CAG will not form sub-committees.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG):

The TAG consists of professional staff from the City of Flagstaff who will work together in different capacities based on their level of participation/interest in the new Zoning Code. The TAG consists of three related groups of participants:

- **Core Team:**

The Core Team will meet weekly as necessary and will be required to have a high degree of participation in all aspects of the Zoning Code Rewrite including decision making on the new code's structure, code writing and review, the design charrette and form-based code component, etc. This team will assist the Project Manager to manage the process for rewriting the LDC as well as the content of the new code. The Core Team will also keep current with any new bills or legislative acts that may have an impact on the Zoning Code Rewrite.

- **Review Team:**

The Review Team is composed of the remaining staff from the Project Management Program who will assist the Core Team with the review of ordinance drafts, provide suggestions on detailed code language, and will participate in the design charrette and micro-scale documentation (synoptic survey for the form-based code). The Review Team will meet with the Core Team as necessary throughout the duration of the Zoning Code Rewrite project.

- **Specialist Team:**

The Specialist Team is comprised of all the staff technical specialists from Sections and Programs within the City who may have an interest and a stake in the new Zoning Code project. As their area of expertise is frequently limited to a specific topic or area of interest, members of the Specialist Team will not have as much involvement in the Zoning Code Rewrite as other TAG members unless they choose to do so. The Specialist Team members will meet with the TAG as necessary to review proposed amendments specific to their area of interest. Members of the Specialist Team will also work closely with Focus Groups or Commissions associated with their particular area of interest.

Some members of the City staff are liaisons to established Commissions. These Commissions will effectively function as "Focus Groups" for the following areas of applicability to the new Zoning Code. The name of the staff /specialist liaison is also included.

COMMISSION NAME:	STAFF SPECIALISTS:
Historic Preservation	Karl Eberhard
Parks and Recreation	Elizabeth Neumayer
Open Space	Brian Grube
Water	Malcolm Alter
Sustainability	Nicole Woodman
Traffic	Jeff Bauman
Disability Awareness Commission	Jim Wine
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees	Martin Ince